DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 730 AC 003 635

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Learning Orientations of Adults for Enrolling in the Part-Time B.A. Program at the University of Guelph.

Guelph Univ. (Ontario). Ontario Agricultural Coll.
Report No-R-25
Pub Date Sep 68
Note-9p.; Paper presented at the National Seminar on Adult Education Research (Toronto, February 9-11, 1969)
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.55
Descriptors-Age Differences, Analysis of Variance, Family Status, Females, Goal Orientation, Group Instruction, Independent Study, Males, Marital Status, *Motivation, *Participation, *Part Time Students, Research, Socioeconomic Background, *Undergraduate Study, *University Extension

A study was made of the relationship of the relative scores of respondents on each of five learning orientations (learning, desire for sociability, personal goal, societal goal, and need fulfillment) to selected personal characteristics (age, sex, marital and family status, occupation, income, residence location, religious preference), social characteristics (number of organizational memberships, group subjects studied, subjects studied independently, and hours devoted to independent study and to study of group subjects), and levels of achievement motivation. Subjects were 91 adults enrolled in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph. Indexes of learning orientation and achievement motivation were used. Findings led to the following conclusions: (1) age allows some prediction of learning and sociability orientations; (2) occupational status permits a limited prediction of sociability, need fulfillment, and personal goal orientations; (3) religious preference predicts desire for sociability orientation; (4) levels of achievement motivation predict personal goal orientations. (One table is included.) (ly)

ED025730

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LEARNING ORIENTATIONS OF ADULTS FOR ENROLLING IN THE PART-TIME B.A. PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

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Report #25

September 1968

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LEARNING ORIENTATIONS OF ADULTS FOR ENROLLING IN THE PART-TIME B.A. PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH*

The Problem

A number of investigators in the field of adult education have suggested that learning orientations are important considerations in the decision of adults to participate or not to participate in educative activities. Participation is important because it places the adult in the learning situation. The learning orientations of adults who enrol in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph were not known. It was the authors' belief that a study of the orientations of adults who participate in this program will: (1) contribute to a better understanding of the general conceptual area of adult learning orientations; and (2) provide valuable information about adults who participate in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph.

Objectives of the Study

The investigation had the following objectives:

(1) To determine the relative score position of respondents on each of five learning orientations (learning, desire for sociability, personal-goal, societal-goal, and need-fulfillment) for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph.

(2) To determine the relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations and a selected number of their personal characteristics.

(3) To determine the relationship between the relative score of respondents on each of the five learning orientations and a selected number of their social characteristics.

(4) To determine the relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations and the level of their achievement motivation.

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*This report was prepared by Fausto Yadao Jr., a graduate student in the Department of Extension Education, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph, from September 1967 to September 1968. The report reviews findings from his M.Sc. thesis, conducted under the guidance of Prof. G. L. Warlow of the Department of Extension Education. Financial assistance from the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food for the project is gratefully acknowledged.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following general hypotheses were formulated for the study:

(1) There is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of five learning orientations (learning, desire for sociability, personal-goal, societal-goal, and need-fulfillment) for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph and a selected number of their personal characteristics.

The personal characteristics investigated under this hypothesis were:

1. Sex
2. Chronological Age
3. Marital Status
4. Number of Living Children
5. Occupation
6. Income
7. Residence Location
8. Religious Preference

(2) There is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph and a selected number of their social characteristics.

The social characteristics investigated under this hypothesis were:

1. Number of Organizational Memberships
2. Number of Group Subjects Taken
3. Number of Subjects Studied Independently
4. Number of Hours Devoted to Studying Group Subjects
5. Number of Hours Devoted to Independent Study

(3) There is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph and the level of their achievement motivation.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was composed of ninety-one adults enrolled in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph during the spring semester of 1968.

Methodology

The instrument used to collect data for the study was a mailed out questionnaire with the following divisions:

1. Learning Orientation Index. This index was composed of fifty-eight statements of reasons for participation in educative activities. It was designed to measure the five learning orientations of respondents for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph.

2. Index of Achievement Motivation. This portion of the questionnaire was composed of seven questions designed to measure the level of achievement motivation of the respondents.

3. The third section of the instrument was composed of: (1) questions to determine the number of educative activities (group and independent) undertaken by the respondents; and (2) a question to ascertain the degree of their participation in voluntary organizations.

4. The final portion of the instrument sought to ascertain a number of the respondents' personal information which were used in the analysis and interpretation of data.

Procedures for Analysis

In order to determine the relative position of the respondents' scores on each of the five measures of learning orientations, it was decided to use the mean of each orientation distribution as a dividing line. The respondents' scores were then assigned either above or below the mean of the five orientation distributions.

The classified scores of respondents on each of the five learning orientation distributions were then cross-tabulated with a selected number of their personal, social, and psychological characteristics.

A chi-square test was used to determine the existence or non-existence of a relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations and their personal, social, and psychological characteristics.

Summary of Findings

1. It was hypothesized that there is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations (learning, desire for sociability, personal-goal, societal-goal, and need-fulfillment) and a selected number of their personal characteristics.

The following were the results obtained:

(1) It was observed that a greater number of females scored above the mean in learning, desire for sociability, and societal-goal orientations. On the other hand, a greater number of males scored above the mean in personal-goal orientation.

(2) A greater number of middle age (30-39) and older adults (40 years and over) scored above the mean in learning orientation. On the other hand, a larger proportion of young adults (age 29 and less) scored above the mean in desire for sociability orientation. This finding was interpreted as inconsistent with research findings which showed that older adults use education for less utilitarian purposes while younger adults use it for more utilitarian reasons.

(3) A greater proportion of single, divorced, and widowed respondents scored above the mean in desire for sociability, societal-goal; and need-fulfillment orientations. This observation was interpreted as being related to the findings of Kuhlen and Johnson[1] who suggested that a significant number of women identified marriage as their primary aim in the next ten years of their life.

(4) A greater proportion of respondents with no children scored above the mean in desire for sociability orientation. On the other hand, a greater number of respondents with at least one child had scores above the mean in personal-goal and learning orientations. It was conjectured that for the latter group, the fact of having children might have motivated them to approach continuing education with a utilitarian outlook in view of their additional family responsibility.

(5) A greater number of housewives scored above the mean in all orientations except personal-goal. This observation was interpreted as essentially consistent with research which suggested that a significant number of women use educative activities to escape from the repetitive tasks at home.

(6) A larger proportion of respondents with an income of less than $6,000.00 had scores above the mean in personal-goal and need-fulfillment orientations. It was speculated that this trend might be related to research suggesting that economic pressures coupled and merged with career advancement desires account for a significant number of young adults being attracted to adult education classes.

(7) A greater number of respondents from Guelph scored above the mean in need-fulfillment orientation. It was surmised that the proximity of the educational institution might have encouraged this group to consider enrolment in the part-time B.A. program as a convenient means of satisfying certain personal needs.

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[1] Raymond G. Kuhlen and G. H. Johnson, "Changes in Goals with Increasing Adult Age." Journal of Consult. Psychology. Vol. 16, 1952. pp. 1-4.

(8) A statistically significant relationship at the .05 level resulted from the analysis of the relationship between the relative score position of respondents in desire for sociability orientation and religious preference. The coefficient of contingency (.30) indicated a fairly strong degree of association between variables. It was observed that a greater proportion (72%) of Catholic respondents scored above the mean in desire for sociability orientation. In contrast, only 35 percent of Protestant respondents scored above the mean in this orientation. It was speculated that the relative importance attached by Catholics to the social motive in their approach to continuing education might be a reflection of their desire to cultivate social relationships which may not have been fully satisfied in their church activities.

2. It was hypothesized that there is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph and a selected number of their social characteristics.

The following observations resulted from the analysis of data:

(1) A greater number of respondents with one organizational membership scored above the mean in need-fulfillment orientation. It was conjectured that respondents in this category probably consider continuing education as an opportunity to extend their affiliative desires, whereas such a motive may no longer be important to those who have more than one organizational membership.

(2) A larger proportion of respondents who had not taken any group subject scored above the mean in desire for sociability and need-fulfillment orientations. This observation was interpreted as a reflection of the desire of this group to satisfy socially directed wants in their approach to continuing education.

(3) Among respondents who had undertaken independent study, a larger proportion scored above the mean in learning orientation. It was speculated that the success of this group in directing their own study might have motivated them to approach continuing education with a predominantly learning outlook.

(4) Among respondents who had devoted less than eighty hours to studying group subjects, a larger proportion scored above the mean in learning orientation. It was conjectured that this group probably found in continuing education an opportunity to extend rewarding group experiences.

(5) A greater number of respondents who devoted more than eighty hours to independent study scored above the mean in learning and desire for sociability orientation. It was conjectured that this observation might be related to Houle's findings suggesting that some continuing learners are neither learning, goal, nor activity oriented but somewhere in between these categories.

3. It was hypothesized that there is no relationship between the relative score position of respondents on each of the five learning orientations for enrolling in the part-time B.A. program at the University of Guelph and the level of their achievement motivation.

(1) A statistically significant relationship at the .02 level resulted from the analysis of the relationship between the relative score position of respondents in personal-goal orientation and their level of achievement motivation. The coefficient of contingency (.33) indicated a strong association between variables. It was noted that among respondents in the medium and high levels of achievement motivation, a greater number scored above the mean in personal-goal orientation. It appeared that respondents who had fairly high achievement motivation considered personal-goal oriented reasons as important in their approach to continuing education.

Conclusions

1. Among middle age respondents (age 30-39) and older adults (age 40 and over), a higher percentage scored above the mean in learning orientation. The relative importance these adults attached to learning in their further education may be a reflection of the pressures of time in their effort to achieve lifelong educational goals. On the other hand, among younger adults (age 29 and less), a greater number had scores above the mean in desire for sociability orientation. For this group, social interest seems to characterize their approach to continuing education. Based on the foregoing findings, it may be concluded that chronological age allows some prediction of learning and desire for sociability orientations although no statistically significant findings resulted from the analysis of data.

2. There was a higher proportion of housewives who scored above the mean in desire for sociability and need-fulfillment orientations. In the case of this group, further education may have been viewed as an opportunity to escape from the monotony of everyday tasks at home as suggested by the findings of Johnstone and Rivera[1]. On the other hand, a greater number of gainfully employed respondents scored above the mean in personal-goal orientation. This trend may be attributed to a desire on the part of adults in this group to achieve definite goals in their approach to continuing education. On the basis of the foregoing findings, it may be concluded that occupational status permits a limited prediction of sociability, need-fulfillment, and personal-goal orientations.

3. Some differences were observed among Protestant and Catholic respondents in the study. Among Catholic respondents, there was a higher proportion who scored above the mean in learning and desire for sociability

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[1] John W. C. Johnstone and Ramon Rivera, Volunteers for Learning. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965) p. 156.

orientations. It appears that Catholics were concerned primarily with learning and social interests in their continuing education. On the other hand, among Protestant respondents, there was a higher percentage who scored above the mean in need-fulfillment orientation. For this group, the desire to satisfy personal needs is more important. On the basis of the findings discussed, there is support in the conclusion that religious preference predicts desire for sociability orientation.

4. A greater number of respondents who were on the high and medium level of achievement motivation scored above the mean in personal-goal orientation. On the basis of this finding and the fact that the strength of the relationship between level of achievement motivation and the relative score position of respondents in personal-goal orientation was fairly strong, it may be concluded that level of achievement motivation predicts personal-goal orientation.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. This study examined learning orientations of adults only at one point in time. It may be profitable to investigate learning orientations at different stages of the educational involvement of adults to find out whether or not changes occur in the emphasis they give to individual orientations.

2. A longitudinal study might examine the relationship between learning orientations and the achievement of mature students to find out if an adult's learning orientation at the time of his enrollment is related to his academic performance.

TABLE 1*

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' SCORE POSITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MEAN OF FIVE LEARNING ORIENTATION DISTRIBUTIONS

Score Position	Learning Orientations									
	Learning		Desire for Sociability		Personal-Goal		Societal-Goal		Need-Fulfillment	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Above Mean	43	58%	37	50%	46	62%	37	50%	35	47%
Below Mean	31	42	37	50	28	38	37	50	39	53
Total	74	100%	74	100%	74	100%	74	100%	74	100%

*Taken from the M.Sc. thesis of Fausto Yadao, Jr. entitled "Learning Orientations of Adults for Enrolling in the Part-Time B.A. Program at the University of Guelph."

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